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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

18 October 1984

Soviet Response to US Withdrawal from UNESCOSummary

In the immediate aftermath of a US withdrawal from UNESCO, the Soviets would continue their effective exploitation of UNESCO programs. They would gain marginally because the potential for US opposition to their efforts would be gone but they would lose marginally because UNESCO would have 25 percent less to spend on programs of interest to Moscow. In the longer run, we do not believe the Soviets would seek or need major changes in UNESCO programs. The central fact is that the Soviets are doing quite well in UNESCO and have little incentive to bring about major change. We believe that UNESCO's Third World majority combined with East Bloc support for programs and policies opposed by the West aided by the entrenched and well directed Soviets in the Secretariat limit the effectiveness of US efforts to change the organization. Unless the US and its allies get more control of UNESCO budget decisions and unless they are willing to engage in a sustained day to day fight with the Soviets and their friends, we are not optimistic about the effectiveness of US efforts to reform UNESCO. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by analysts in the Office of Global Issues and the Office of Soviet Analysis. Information available as of 18 October 1984 has been used. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, International Organizations Branch, International Security Issues Division, Office of Global Issues [redacted]

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Soviet Response to a US Withdrawal from UNESCOSoviet Objectives

Our review of Soviet participation in UNESCO indicates that Moscow is currently exploiting UNESCO programs in the education, scientific, and communication fields effectively and consistently. UNESCO is tailor-made for Soviet initiatives designed to influence media content, particularly in the Third World, to establish contact with influential persons in the educational, scientific and cultural fields and to gain specific technical information. The breadth of Soviet efforts to use UNESCO to achieve their objectives, the extent of Soviet presence on the UNESCO staff and the size of the Soviet delegation indicate that the Soviets consider UNESCO to be one of the most important international organizations. [redacted]

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We believe the Soviets are positioning themselves to achieve three basic objectives during consideration of UNESCO reform proposals and following a US departure:

- o Avoid withdrawal of US allies by agreeing to modest management and budget reforms in order to maintain UNESCO as a viable, full scale international organization.
- o Bolster their position with the Third World by opposing the most significant reforms proposed by the US and other Western nations.
- o Protect their interests in specific UNESCO programs, particularly in the communications, education and science sectors. [redacted]

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Viable UNESCO

We believe that the Soviets want US allies to remain in UNESCO in order to preserve the organization's appearance as a legitimate international forum and to have others pay the bulk of the bill. To this end, the Soviets have agreed with the need to reform UNESCO's management and to control budget growth. They also propose a "gentlemen's agreement" which would have the effect of increasing the influence of countries--including Western Europe and Japan--contributing over 51 percent of UNESCO's budget. We believe Moscow, in fact, has an interest in a better managed and less costly UNESCO because Soviet policy benefits from effectively administered

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UNESCO programs. More importantly, we believe Moscow wants the last best offer regarding UNESCO reform proposals to be attractive enough to keep US allies from departing. [REDACTED]

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Play to the Third World

The Soviets are following their well established pattern of behavior in international organizations by supporting the Third World where possible without sacrificing Moscow's principle objectives. Moscow has supported its Third World friends by harsh public attacks on US initiatives calling them an unacceptable ultimatum and an attack on the whole UN system. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Moscow has stated that it will not pay more for UNESCO. Although Third World members want additional resources for UNESCO programs, they have repeatedly acquiesced to Soviet unwillingness to increase funding for other organizations. [REDACTED]

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Program Exploitation

We have reviewed UNESCO programs and policies in the communications, education and scientific fields. We conclude that if the US withdraws, the Soviets are likely to continue to exploit these programs effectively during the next year and beyond. [REDACTED]

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Communications

The key issue in this sector is UNESCO's New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO). The Soviet delegate to the current session of UNESCO's Executive Board, Ambassador Yermelenko, declared on 28 September that Moscow supports the Third World majority's interest in developing "information independence" and checking the "free flow" of news produced by the Western press. With the US gone, Moscow would continue to promote NWICO concepts as a means of moving Third World journalism away from primary reliance on Western news services. We can expect the Soviets to try and shape the debate over the NWICO to focus attention on alleged abuses by the Western press in its coverage of developing countries. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets could mount a greater effort in the communications sector to promote the Soviet model of state-controlled news production in the standards and guidelines UNESCO sets for Third World media development. They will try to discredit the Western press in UNESCO circles particularly with those delegations which have an affinity for state-controlled news. As a member of UNESCO's International Program [REDACTED]

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[redacted]

for the Development of Communications (IPDC), they will press their objectives, as declared by TASS Deputy General Krasikov in Pravda last year, for that program:

- o Monitoring the status of mass media development of Third World countries.
- o Helping to shape the information policies of those countries.
- o Influencing the allocation of multilateral aid in the media field. [redacted]

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They are already engaged in an effort to push UNESCO into implementing a program for controlling Western journalists in Third World countries. State Department sources report that a Soviet front organization, the Federation of Latin American Journalists (FELAP) will host a conference in Mexico City in March 1985 on "working conditions and security of journalists." This phrasing is a euphemism for encouraging government licensing of newsmen. FELAP has stated that it hopes the conference will lead to establishment of an international commission for protection of journalists which would issue identity cards to foreign journalists in areas of armed conflict. The UNESCO Director of Communications Policies is cooperating with FELAP and will provide funds for the conference. We can expect the Soviets to press this issue vigorously in the absence of US countervailing action. [redacted]

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Education

The Soviets have the leadership position in Education with Assistant Director General for Education Sema Tanguiane, a Soviet Armenian, in the post for 10 years. He originally recruited Director General M'Bow for UNESCO when the latter was Minister of Education in Senegal, according to US Embassy reporting. Since a Soviet also has the responsibility for the Education for Peace program in Tanguiane's sector, Tanguiane can continue to use UNESCO for promoting the Soviet version of "peace" education and the work of Soviet "peace" fronts. The Soviets also have a directorship in the International Institute for Education Planning as well as the directorship of the UNESCO library. We expect them to continue to support such efforts as a teacher training program in Afghanistan which promotes Marxist-Lenninist dogma and to fund travel of Soviet groups as well as scholarships for Third World students' study in the Soviet Union. [redacted]

[redacted]

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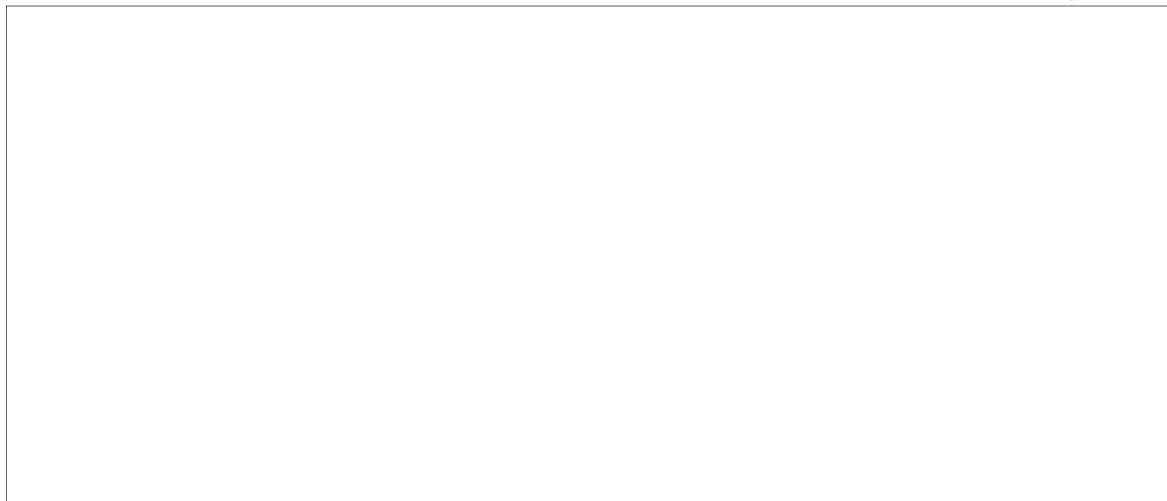
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Science

The Soviet and East Bloc delegations to UNESCO recently have successfully lobbied a key French science official in the Secretariat to include the theme of "ecological consequences of the arms race" on the agenda of the program on man and the biosphere. This is an example of how Soviets have politicized otherwise respected programs in this sector. According to Soviet Ambassador Yermelenko, UNESCO cannot avoid reflecting political and ideological trends. We can expect the science sector, which the US Embassy reports has been reasonably free of political bias, to become more politicized given the success of this Soviet initiative. We believe the UNESCO science sector could well become a participant in current international discussions on the climatic effects of nuclear war and nuclear winter research. In that event, the Soviet media will be able to cite UNESCO as an expression of international interest in this subject. We have not seen any evidence that US allies would work vigorously to oppose these Soviet uses of UNESCO science programs. [REDACTED]

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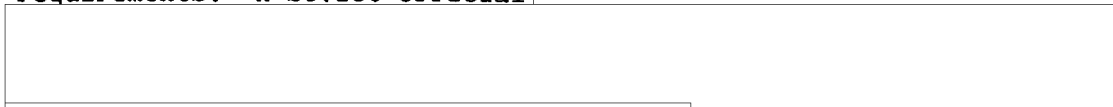


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Copyright Information

Soviet nationals in UNESCO Secretariat positions have, with pliant supervisors, skewed their official functions to fit Soviet requirements. A Soviet official [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] is able to acquire commercial computer software and databanks the USSR would have difficulty obtaining directly. According to State Department

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reporting, he has been instrumental in using UNESCO resources to develop databases of copyright information of interest to the USSR. This is a high priority effort for the Soviets and we believe it will continue unabated without US opposition. [redacted]

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UNESCO Without the US

We believe that if the US withdraws from UNESCO prior to next year's scheduled UNESCO budget review, the Soviets would continue their exploitation of UNESCO much as they do today. Soviet officials in key secretariat slots can minimize the impact of budget cuts on programs of particular interest to Moscow. We do not believe that they would seek to "take over" the organization; nor do they need to do so to achieve their objectives. A Soviet effort to secure major changes in policies or programs could provide marginal increments in Moscow's ability to use UNESCO but it would bring them into needless conflict with Third World members protecting their favorite programs and with US allies who are unlikely to ignore egregious Soviet behavior. A key point is that the US has been less concerned about the size of UNESCO programs than about their content. Because of the high proportion of the UNESCO budget devoted to staff salaries, we may see some personnel cuts, but little change in program content. Furthermore, the Soviets are in position to protect programs of interest to them and could rely on Third World support for the NWICO and Disarmament efforts. We believe that UNESCO in the immediate aftermath of a US withdrawal would look much like UNESCO today with the Soviets gaining marginally because the potential for US opposition would be gone and losing marginally because UNESCO would have 25 percent less to spend on programs of interest to the USSR. [redacted]

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The Longer Run

Neither UNESCO nor any other large international organization changes the major thrust of its programs or policies rapidly. The need to resolve the conflicting and competing demands of 160 members with very different ideological views means that change is slow, inertia dominates, budget cycles are long and inflexible. Therefore, we believe that Soviet opportunities to bring about major changes in the organization would be limited by the nature of the organization itself as well as by Soviet efforts to support Third World positions where possible and by opposition of US allies remaining in UNESCO. [redacted]

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The UNESCO programs Moscow exploits and influences today would be likely to remain essentially unchanged in five or seven years if the US withdraws. We believe that the central fact is that the Soviets are doing quite well in achieving their objectives through current

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programs and have little incentive to bring about major change. Here, two key points affect our judgment. First, although the Soviets have been successful in using UNESCO programs for their own purposes, UNESCO is fundamentally a Third World organization. Its programs reflect the demands of the Third World majority, supported in most cases by the East Bloc. In short, the opposition has the votes. The US proposal to increase the influence of the majority donors is aimed directly at this fact and, we believe, has little chance of adoption. Second, even if the Third World agrees to some of the program changes we advocate, the Soviets have key positions in the bureaucracy from which to continue their efforts to use UNESCO programs for their own purposes. Although more Americans are employed by UNESCO than Soviets, Americans abide by international civil service regulations while the Soviets work for Moscow. As long as this continues, Moscow will maintain an edge in execution of programs and policies. [REDACTED]

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Financial Leverage

We believe that the Third World majority is sensitive to the impact of losing 25 percent of the budget of UNESCO--and potentially losing US support for other UN programs. That fact does give the US and its allies some leverage. Even if the US withdraws, the potential to come back in at some future date provides some financial leverage.

[REDACTED]

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Reduced Prestige

We do not believe that either the Third World or the Soviets would be concerned about loss of prestige by UNESCO if the US withdraws alone. They would be more concerned about loss of funding. If the US and its allies withdrew, UNESCO would become a hollow shell--both poor and small. [REDACTED]

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Continued Soviet Exploitation

We believe that the Soviets would be able to continue to exploit education, science, and press programs effectively if the US withdraws while its allies remain. We do not believe that US allies would increase their opposition to Soviet efforts in UNESCO. Even if the Western states did decide to actively oppose Soviet exploitation of UNESCO and some of UNESCO's more offensive programs, we do not believe they have much of a chance of success for all the reasons we discussed above plus the fact that they would not have the financial leverage of joining with the largest donor--the US. We believe that UNESCO would

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go on much as it does today, but the Soviets would be able to tighten their hold on key secretariat slots particularly as American employees leave or are forced out following a US withdrawal. [REDACTED]

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Impact of US Reform Efforts

The US and its allies have had an impact on UNESCO programs and management. The reforms proposed by the Temporary Committee of UNESCO's Executive Board would help to slow UNESCO growth, and improve the management of the organization. When the US has focused on a particular program, the NWICO for example, the US has been able to moderate if not stop some of the more negative results of UNESCO activities. Even the Soviets and the Third World have agreed with the need to improve UNESCO management. However, the key point is that the Third World majority and East Bloc support for programs and policies opposed by the West combined with the entrenched and well directed Soviets in the Secretariat limit the effectiveness of US efforts to change the organization. Unless the US and its allies get more control of UNESCO budget decisions and unless they are willing to engage in a sustained, day to day fight with the Soviets and their friends, we are not optimistic about the effectiveness of US efforts to reform UNESCO. [REDACTED]

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Program Alternatives to UNESCO

We have not examined the content of UNESCO programs in detail. However, UNESCO is not the only multilateral or bilateral agency capable of supporting teacher training, scholarships, scientific exchanges or even supporting some cultural activities. We believe that the US and its allies have more than enough alternative conduits for the effort they now put into UNESCO to maintain support for significant, viable programs. [REDACTED]

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Appendix I

Secretary General M'Bow

We believe that Secretary General M'Bow's principal interest during the current negotiations and in the event of a US withdrawal will be to maintain his political base among Third World members without offending either the socialist wing of the Western Group or the Soviets. He has benefitted from both Soviet and Western, particularly French, patronage during his career. He cannot afford to offend either camp and succeed in his ambition to position himself as a Third World candidate for UN Secretary General. Although he has clashed with both the US and conservative European parliamentarians, we believe M'Bow will attempt to salvage a last minute accord with the US and its reform minded allies, not only to keep the US and its resources in UNESCO but also to avoid further damage to his ambitions for higher office. In the event of US withdrawal, we do not see much change in M'Bow's behavior. We believe the Soviets benefit from a weak Director General with ambitions for higher office. He is less likely to challenge their influence over programs than a stronger administrator whose ambition is limited to improving UNESCO. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Soviet Response to US Withdrawal from UNESCO [REDACTED]

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OGI/ISID/IO [REDACTED] (18 October 1984)

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